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# NAVY MED NAVIGATOR

## Smallpox vaccine prepares Comfort crew for unknown

### Headlining in U.S. news...

President Bush heads to Pennsylvania today to renew his call for limits on medical malpractice awards. Bush wants to limit "pain-and-suffering" awards to 250-thousand dollars. He also wants to hold punitive damages in malpractice cases to no more than twice a patient's actual financial loss. Bush says skyrocketing insurance premiums are forcing good doctors to stop practicing -- and driving up the cost of care. Earlier this month, doctors in West Virginia stopped seeing patients in protest -- and there have been similar moves in other states.

A judge in Fairfax, Virginia, says 17-year-old sniper suspect John Lee Malvo can be tried as an adult -- meaning he could get the death penalty if convicted. Prosecutors say evidence including fingerprints on the murder weapon connects Malvo to at least four sniper attacks, three of them fatal. A key part of the prosecution's death penalty case lies with allegations that Malvo tauntingly tried to extort 10 million dollars from authorities during the string of attacks. Prosecutors say that qualifies Malvo to be charged under Virginia new anti-terrorism statute, which carries the death penalty.

### In Navy news...

Sailors assigned to the Republic of the Philippines on or after Jan. 9, 2002, with orders specifically "in direct support of" Operation Enduring Freedom -- Philippines (OEF-PI), are eligible for the tax-related benefits. Sailors serving in Djibouti on or after July 1, 2002, are also entitled to the combat zone tax relief. Enlisted Sailors' and warrant officers' federal and state wages are excluded as taxable wages, while officers' federal and state wages are excluded up to an amount equal to the monthly basic pay of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, plus authorized hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay.

### In sports...

Steve Mariucci is a man without a team, and it doesn't look like he's in any hurry to find another head coaching job. Mariucci was dismissed by the San Francisco 49ers this week during a 90-minute meeting with team owner John York. All Mariucci did was go 57-and-39 with four playoff appearances in six seasons with the Niners, including 10-and-6 this season. His record includes a two-year rebuilding phase in which San Francisco was 10-and-22. However, there was friction between Mariucci and upper management, general manager Terry Donohue. Word is Mariucci wanted a bigger role in player personnel decisions.



HN Christopher Blake receives his smallpox immunization Jan. 12 from fellow corpsman HN Matthew Moritz.

Story/photos by JO2 Ellen Maurer

It almost seems as if the familiar white patch on each person's arm has become a semi-permanent and rather intimate addition to the shipboard uniform, gracing the left upper appendage of nearly every crewmember aboard Comfort -- Navy and Civilians alike. While it may be covered up by a tee shirt and coveralls, indications of its existence are there, from the somewhat accepted behavior of randomly slapping your own arm silly (Don't scratch!) to the common question asked of both male and female crew -- "What day are you on?"

According to Cmdr. Jim

Fraley, the whole process is going pretty much as planned. 100 percent of the ship's active-duty crew has been screened; nearly 85 percent have received the smallpox vaccination. The remainder were either deferred or waived due to medical reasons.

At this point, everyone that has received their 15 tiny pricks have "had a take," which means that they have physical indications on their seventh day of a successful immunization. The physical indications include a rather unattractive pustule that eventually dries up, scabs over and then scars. The whole process takes about 21 days.

While it isn't the easiest

three weeks to get through, Fraley also says Comfort crew reactions to the vaccine have been very normal so far, meaning that all the physical discomforts -- the itching, tender lymph nodes, and general soreness at the vaccination site -- were expected, and not serious.

Mental reactions have been relatively low key, as well, according to HN Matthew Moritz, a corpsman that works for Fraley in Sick Bay and personally administered many of the smallpox vaccines.

"People seem to be not worried about getting these vaccinations, but it does make them think about why they need them. There is a lot of speculation (about what we're going to do) but I just keep reminding people that this is just the "get-ready" phase."

So that is what Moritz and the rest of the crew are doing.

On a mission that continues to hold so much uncertainty, crewmembers aboard USNS Comfort are still saying they are sure of one thing -- they're sure they are ready. Now, the only question that remains is just what they must be ready for.

## Remembering Martin Luther King Jr.

By Rudi Williams  
American Forces Press Service

The nation will observe the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday tomorrow. Celebrations and activities surrounding the holiday are occurring on military installations throughout the Department of Defense.

This year marks what would have been the 74th birthday of the slain civil rights leader, humanitarian and clergyman. He was born in Atlanta Jan. 15, 1929.

It is also 20 years since the designation of the King holiday. President Ronald Reagan signed a bill in November 1983 designating the third Monday in January, beginning in 1986, as a federal holiday.

As it has been for many years, this year's theme is "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On ... Not A Day Off." The theme is issued annually by the King Center in Atlanta, which acts as the national promoter of the King Day observance.

In a commemoration message, King's widow, Coretta Scott King, said the holiday "celebrates the life and legacy of a man who brought hope and healing to America. We commemorate as well the timeless values he taught us through his example - the values of courage, truth, justice, compassion, dignity, humility and service that so radiantly defined Dr. King's character and empowered his leadership. On this holiday, we commemorate the universal, unconditional love, forgiveness and nonviolence that empowered his revolutionary spirit."

She said the world commemorates her late husband's inspiring words because his voice and vision filled a great void and answered the country's longing to become a nation that "truly lived by its noblest principles."

Noting that programs commemorating her husband's birthday are being observed in more than 100 nations, Mrs. King pointed out he envisioned a world whose people and nations had triumphed over poverty, racism, war and violence.

"This holiday honors the courage of a man who endured harassment, threats and beatings and even bombings," she said. "We commemorate the man who went to jail 29 times to achieve freedom for others and who knew he would pay the ultimate price for his leadership, but kept on marching and protesting and organizing anyway."

Above all, she emphasized, King Day is a day of service.

"All across America on the holiday, his followers perform service in hospitals, shelters, prisons and wherever people need some help," she said. "It's a day of volunteering to feed the hungry, rehabilitate housing, tutoring those who can't read, mentoring at risk youngsters, consoling the broken hearted and a thousand other projects for building the beloved community of his dream."

For related news, go to the  
Navy NewsStand Web site at  
[www.news.navy.mil](http://www.news.navy.mil).

## Religious Services Schedule

Morning Prayer — 6:30 a.m., every morning  
Bible Study—Wed. at 7 p.m.  
Catholic Eucharistic Service — Sat. 11 a.m.

### Sunday Services

Orthodox Services — 8 a.m.  
Catholic Eucharistic Service — 9 a.m.  
Protestant Service — 10 a.m.

**Chapel location: 3-78-0**

## Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Mark Koczak

Each of us on USNS Comfort has started on a journey. For some, this is the first time at sea. For those of us who have been to sea before, this trip is still a new and different experience.

For the last 17 and a half years, I have served as a Chaplain in the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. (Some of you have heard some sea stories from me.)

It is our job in the Navy to work as a unit and to complete our mission. The question that each of us has to answer is why are we here?

For me, as your Chaplain, I am here to serve you the crew, which includes ROS, FOS, and MSC aboard COMFORT. You are my first concern, from the Captain down to my friends - the FSAs and the deck folks. When and if the patients come, if I have been a good Chaplain and shipmate to you, I will be able to serve them also.

Therefore, I need to know what you do in your jobs on the ship. So, you will see me in your spaces, learning and listening to your concerns. This will help me to understand who you are.

Many of you, like me, have waited an entire military career to be in this position. For those of us with experience and, perhaps, a bit older, we are used to the unknown and to waiting. For the younger folks, talk to us and ask questions.

We are all loved, cared for and prayed for by hundreds of people back home. We are not alone out here and where ever we will go. God is certainly with us on the Comfort.

He is always with each one of us as a person made by Him and He is with us as part of the crew because we all serve our fellow human beings as a hospital ship.

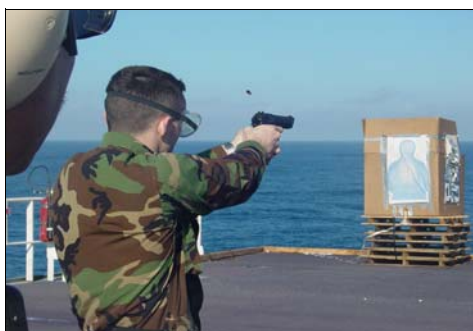
Let us spend these next days coming together as a crew and total team. This is the best of times to get to know each other as shipmates.

# USNS Comfort News Briefs



Comfort made a one-day stop Friday in Rota, Spain to on-load supplies and fuel up. Pier side for nearly 24 hours, most crewmembers were able to enjoy some liberty on the nearby Navy base and out in the local community. Although most Sailors had not anticipated stopping in Spain or even getting liberty during the fast-paced working port visit, many said they enjoyed the break from shipboard duty. It is unknown when or where Comfort will stop next.

During Comfort's visit to Rota, Spain, many distinguished visitors from the nearby Navy base, including several Spanish military officials, requested a tour of the ship. Commanding Officer of the Medical Treatment Facility aboard Comfort, Capt. Charles Blankenship showed the group around the ship's facilities, including one Comfort's 11 operating room the OR staff had set up as a simulation of what a real operation aboard Comfort would look like.



Comfort's Security department conducted Basic Small Arms Training and Qualifications last week, allowing more than two dozen Navy Sailors and civilian mariners the opportunity to shoot M-9 pistols, M-14 rifles and 12-gauge shotguns at targets on the flight deck. The four-day course, which is required for certain watch standers, focuses strongly on weapon safety and basic orientation.

The Sick Bay continues to administer anthrax immunizations, reminding folks to stay on schedule:

1st shot

2nd shot — 14 days after 1st shot

3rd shot — 14 days after 2nd shot

4th shot — 5 months after 3rd shot

5th — 6 months after 4th shot

6th shot — 6 months after 5th shot

Annual booster required after 6th shot

Sick Bay offers immunizations 9 — 11:30 a.m., 2 — 4 p.m.

and 6:30 — 7:30 p.m.



Comfort's new Telemedicine capabilities were put to an unusual operations test recently when the popular show "Good Morning America" did a video teleconference (VTC) with the ship from the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. During the VTC, show producers interviewed rescued Bermuda fisherman Bobby Lambe, along with his physician, Cmdr. Terrence Dwyer and Lt. Dean Teague, one of the crew members who assisted in the rescue. VTC is typically used for medical consultation between the ship, NNMC and other locations throughout the fleet.



## Eye on the Fleet

# Gearing up



(Above) Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif. (Jan. 17, 2003) -- Elements of the 1st and 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) units line up to be loaded on to Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) vehicles from Assault Craft Unit Five (ACU-5). The 1st and 3rd LAR are being deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the war on terrorism.



(Left) At sea aboard USS Saipan (LHA 2) Jan. 16, 2003 -- Sailors wear Advanced Chemical Protective Garments during a chemical, biological, and radiological attack (CBR) drill. Saipan is responding to deployment orders received to support the war on terrorism.



(Above) At sea aboard USS Mount Whitney (LCC/JCC 20) Jan. 17, 2003 -- An unidentified U.S. Navy SEAL (SEa, Air, and Land) conducts a fast-rope insertion onto the deck of the amphibious command ship.

(Left) Naval Support Activity, Bahrain (Jan. 16, 2003) -- Adm. Vern Clark, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), speaks with Sailors and Marines assigned to Naval Support Activity, Bahrain. "Be ready," he said, repeating the President's orders to the military regarding the worldwide war on terrorism.



(Above) At sea aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) Jan. 16, 2003 -- An F/A-18 "Hornet" assigned to the "War Party" of Strike Fighter Squadron Eight Seven (VFA-87) is given the clear for launch sign by a "Shooter" on the ship's flight deck. Roosevelt and her embarked Carrier Air Wing Eight (CVW-8) are currently underway conducting training missions in the Atlantic Ocean.



(Below) San Diego, Calif. (Jan. 17, 2003) -- Loaded with U.S. Marines, as well as both medium and heavy lift helicopters, USS Boxer (LHD 4) heads to sea for an unscheduled deployment in support of U.S. national interests. The amphibious assault ship is part of the seventh Amphibious Task Force West (ATF-W).

